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ABSTRACT

This study examined the direct and indirect influences of adolescents' religiosity on selected social-emotional aspects of their development. A total of 369 boys and 372 girls attending 3 Catholic high schools in Winnipeg, Manitoba, completed a questionnaire that addressed family religion, religiosity, prosocial values, school attitudes, family satisfaction, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. The study found that religiosity was strongly correlated with prosocial values, family satisfaction, school attitudes, and life satisfaction. Path analysis indicated that religiosity had strong direct effects on prosocial values, but that the significant correlations of religiosity with school attitudes, family satisfaction, and life satisfaction represented indirect effects. While it was found that data from girls had a very tight fit to the proposed model and data from the total sample fitted the model loosely, data from the boys did not meet the criteria of fitting the model. (MDM)

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CATHOLIC-SCHOOLS ADOLESCENTS' RELIGIOSITY, PROSOCIAL VALUES, SCHOOL ATTITUDES, AND FAMILY SATISFACTION.

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ABSTRACT

In contrast to studies which have emphasized the controlling function of religion in the lives of adolescents, the present study explored its facilitating function. It is postulated that adolescents who are religiously involved would endorse prosocial, rather than egoistical values. Their prosocial values foster a sense of belongingness to their church, family and school. Students attending three Catholic high schools (N = 741, 369 boys, 372 girls) completed instruments, some of which were consolidated into factor scores: (1) Family Religion; (2) Religiosity Factor: Religious Beliefs and Practices, Religious Orientation, Religious Function/Dysfunction, Attitude to Christianity; (3) Prosocial Values Factor: Personal Relations Values (Friendship, Honesty, etc.), Morals, Idealism; (4) School Attitudes; (5) Family Satisfaction; (6) Self Esteem Factor: Rosenberg's SEI, Worchel's SAI, Coopersmith's SES; (7) Life Satisfaction. The theoretical model conceptualized Religiosity as an independent variable which fostered Prosocial Values; Prosocial Values in turn promoted Family Satisfaction and good School Attitudes. Religiosity had significant ($p < .0001$) correlations with Prosocial Values ($r = .41$), Family Satisfaction ($r = .25$), School Attitudes ($r = .26$) and Life Satisfaction ($r = .26$). Prosocial Values had significant correlations with Family Satisfaction ($r = .28$) and School Attitudes ($r = .30$), and Life Satisfaction ($r = .26$). Path analysis indicated that Religiosity had strong direct effects on Prosocial Values, but that the significant correlations of Religiosity with School Attitudes, Family Satisfaction, and Life Satisfaction represented indirect effects. The results indicate that one should study not only the direct, but also the indirect effects of religiosity on adolescents' social-emotional development.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

* The present study explores the direct and indirect **influences of adolescents' religiosity** on some social-emotional aspects of their development.

* Adolescents' social and personal adjustment depends on mastery of a set of **developmental tasks**: e.g., meaningful values, satisfactory family relationships, educational progress, self esteem, life satisfaction, social competence.

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* There has been **little research** as to whether religious commitment facilitates or hinders the mastery of such developmental tasks.

* Religiosity has **two** distinct **functions** in the social-emotional development of adolescents:
(1) **behavior control**;
(2) **social facilitation**.

* Most adolescent research has focused on the **behavior-control** function, e.g., the inverse relationship between religious involvement and antisocial behavior.

* In contrast, the present study focuses on the **social-facilitation** function, i.e., how **religious involvement fosters** prosocial values and ties to social institutions (e.g., **family**, school).

THE PROPOSED MODEL

* **Religiosity** is conceptualized as an **antecedent** variable which directly or indirectly predicts other aspects of adolescents' social-emotional development.

* Because Judeo-Christian teachings emphasize obligations towards God and others, rather than self advancement, religiously involved adolescents are expected to endorse **prosocial**, rather than individualistic values.

* The prosocial values of religious adolescents, in turn, are expected to foster a sense of **belongingness** to their church, family, and school.

* Therefore, the present study **predicts** positive correlations between adolescents' religiosity, prosocial values, family satisfaction, and good school attitudes.

* Because the **individual adjustment** (e.g., self esteem) of adolescents depends on feedback from their social environment (e.g., family and school), the present study predicts that good social adjustment contributes to good individual adjustment.

* Because religiosity and prosocial values focus primarily on good social relationships, rather than on self realization, religiosity is expected to have a stronger and more direct relationship to **social adjustment**, than to **individual adjustment** (e.g., self esteem).

* According to the proposed nonrecursive **path model**: **Religiosity** has direct effects on **prosocial values**; prosocial values are predictors of **family** satisfaction and good **school** attitudes; family satisfaction and good school attitudes predict **individual adjustment** (e.g., self esteem and life satisfaction).

METHOD

THE SAMPLE

* 741 students: 369 boys, 372 girls;
* Grades 9 to 12;
* from 3 Catholic high schools;
* in Winnipeg;
* parents pay high school fees.

PROCEDURE

* students completed questionnaires
* in schools
* during class hours.

STRATEGY

* **multiple measures** of "religiosity", "prosocial values" and "self esteem"; principal-axes **factor analysis** to extract the shared variances of these constructs; factor scores as input for further statistical analyses.

* item and factor analyses used to **shorten** some scales and to improve their methodological properties.

THE MEASURES

(1) **Family Religion**:
* 5-items scale;

(2) **RELIGIOSITY FACTOR**:
- (a) **Beliefs and Practices**:
  7 items from Project Teen Canada;
- (b) **Religious Orientation**:
  8 items scale developed;
- (c) **Religious Function**:
  10 items whether religion has "beneficial" or "harmful" effects;
- (d) **Attitude to Christianity**:
  7-items scale by Francis;

* Factor analysis of the 4 scales yielded single-factor solution with loadings from .81 to .93.

(3) **PROSOCIAL-VALUES FACTOR**:
  (a) **Personal-Relations Values**:
  10 items scale developed;
  (b) **Offer's Idealism**:
  6-items scale from Offer's OSIQ;
  (c) **Offer's Morals**:
  10-items scale from Offer's OSIQ;
* Factor analysis of the 3 scales yielded single-factor solution with loadings from .76 to .81.

(4) **Olson's Family Satisfaction**:
* 14-items scale;

(5) **School Attitudes Measure**:
* 20-items shortened scale;

(6) **SELF-ESTEEM FACTOR**:
  (a) **Rosenberg's Self-Esteem S**:
  10-items scale;
  (b) **Worchel's Self Activity I**:
  10-items shortened scale;
  (c) **Coopersmith's Self-Esteem I**:
  12-items shortened scale;
* Factor analysis of the 3 scales resulted in a single-factor solution with loadings from .74 to .90.

(7) **Diener's Life Satisfaction**:
* 7-items scale.

RESULTS

MEANS

* All scale scores were subject to **linear transformation**;

* Reason: to facilitate comparison of scales with different number of items;

* **Formula**:
transf. score = (scale score)*(2:no. of items) - 1

* For all transformed scales:
  minimum score (unfavorable) = 1,
  middle score (neutral) = 5,
  maximum score (favorable) = 9.

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FACTOR	VARIABLE	Mean	s.d.
.	Family Rel.	5.47	1.84
RELI-GIOSITY	Funct. of R.	6.25	1.38
	Rel. Orient.	5.41	1.94
	Bel. & Prac.	5.92	1.73
	Att. to Chr.	5.73	1.81
PRO-SOCIAL VALUES	Pers. Rel.	7.15	1.26
	Idealism	5.71	1.07
	Morals	6.22	1.10
.	Fam. Satisf.	5.32	1.42
.	School Att.	6.25	1.39
SELF ESTEEM	Rosenberg's	6.16	1.48
	Worchel's	5.38	1.31
	Coopersmiths	5.78	1.78
.	Life Satisf.	5.54	1.61

Note: All means are on the favorable side of the neutral point of 5.0.

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CORRELATIONS OF PROSOCIAL VALUES WITH THE RELIGIOSITY FACTOR

* The Religiosity Factor was correlated with individual Personal Relations Values and the Prosocial Values scales

Values	r
1. Family life	.38
2. Forgiveness	.33
3. Working hard	.27
4. Compassion	.26
5. Generosity	.26
6. Honesty	.24
7. Politeness	.24
8. Being loved	.24
9. Friendship	.13
10. Reliability	.11
Personal Relations Val. sc.	.37
Idealism scale	.31
Morals scale	.28
Prosocial Values Factor	.41

Note: Correlations stronger than .14 are significantly different from zero at $p < .0001$ ($N = 741$).

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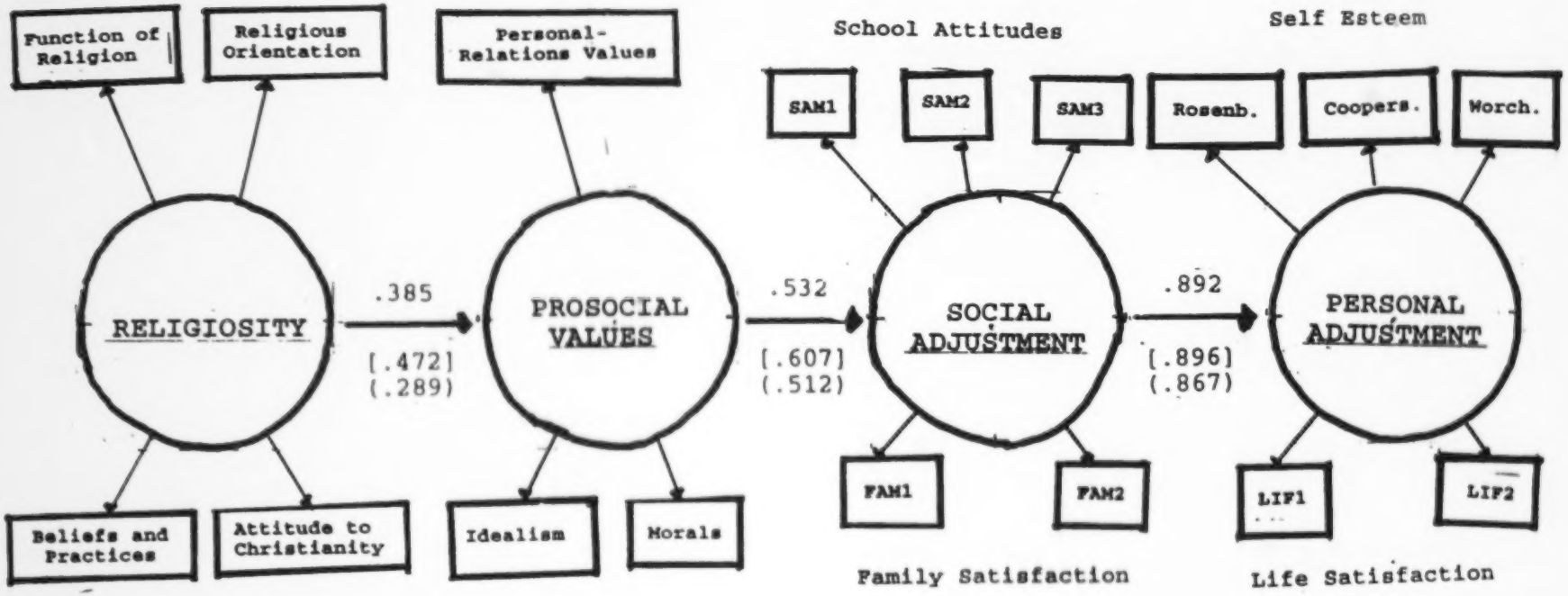
OVERALL CORRELATIONS

	FAM REL	REL FAC	PRO FAC	FAM SAT	SCH ATT	SEL FAC	LIF SAT
FAM REL	.	.39	.16	.12	.07	.10	.10
REL FAC	.39	.	.41	.25	.26	.14	.26
PRO FAC	.16	.41	.	.28	.35	.13	.26
FAM SAT	.12	.25	.28	.	.38	.40	.51
SCH ATT	.07	.26	.35	.38	.	.54	.50
SEL FAC	.10	.14	.13	.40	.54	.	.63
LIF SAT	.10	.26	.26	.51	.50	.63	.

Note: Abbreviations: FAMREL = Family Religion, RELFAC = Religiosity Factor, PROFAC = Prosocial Values Factor, FAMSAT = Family Satisfaction, SCHATT = School Attitudes, SELFAC = Self-Esteem Factor, LIFSAT = Life Satisfaction. Correlations stronger than .14 are significantly different from zero at $p < .0001$ ($N = 741$).

STRUCTURAL-EQUATION MODEL



Total:	$\chi^2/(df) = \chi^2/(2)$ =	8.78,	p = .012,	GFI = .994,	NFI = .988,	NNFI	= .971
[Boys]:	=	16.40,	= .0003,	= .977,	= .958,		= .887
(Girls):	=	2.45,	= .293,	= .997,	= .993,		= .996

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STRUCTURAL-EQUATIONS MODEL: ANALYSES

* According to the **proposed model**, Religiosity===>Prosocial Values===>Social Adjustment (i.e., Family Satifaction, School Attitudes)===>Personal Adjustment (i.e, Self Esteem, Life Satisfaction).
* **LISREL** model run by Proc. Calis.SAS (1994), version 6.
* Some **scales** (i.e., Schools Attitudes, Family Satisfaction, Life Satisfaction) were **split** into subscales for the analysis.
* Three analyses: Total sample (N = 741), boys (N = 369), girls (N = 372). See figure.

STRUCTURAL-EQUATION MODEL: RESULTS

* Data from **girls** had a very tight fit to the proposed model; data from total sample fitted the model loosely; and data from boys did not meet the stringent criteria of fitting the model.
* **Religiosity** had a strong, direct effect on **Prosocial** Values, but that the significant correlations between Religiosity and **Social Adjustment** represents an indirect effect, mediated via Prosocial Values.
* **Prosocial Values** had a direct effect on **Social Adjustment**, but only an indirect effect on **Personal Adjustment**.
* **Social Adjustment** was a strong predictor of **Personal Adjustment**.

CONCLUSIONS

* The results of the study support the view that religiosity has a **social-facilitation** function for adolescents.
* Adolescents with higher religious commitment tend to endorse **prosocial values** more.
* The strong relationship between religiosity and prosocial values probably reflects the **teachings** of religious schools that one should place the welfare of others over one's self interest.
* Because prosocial values promote **social adjustment** more than they do **individual adjustment**, adolescent's religiosity has a stronger and more direct relation to social adjustment than to individual adjustment.
* The pattern of intercorrelations and the structural-equation analyses provide some support for the **model** that religiosity had a direct effect only on prosocial values, that endorsement of prosocial values facilitates social adjustment, and that social adjustment fosters personal adjustment.
* It is helpful to study not only the direct effects of religiosity, but also its **indirect effects** on adolescents' social-emotional development.